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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/613,252

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Jim Hranica

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01/29/2007

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EXAMINER

CABRERA, ZOILA E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2125

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

01/29/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/613,252

Applicant(s)

HRANICA ET AL.

Examiner

Zoila E. Cabrera

Art Unit

2125

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 November 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5-22 and 24-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,5-13,21,22,24 and 25 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 14,15,18-20,26-28 and 31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 16-17, 29-30 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Final Rejection

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1-3, 5-22, 24-31 are presented for consideration.

Claims 4 and 23 have been cancelled.

The rejection with respect to claims 14-15, 18-20, 26-28, 31 is maintained.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kusmierczyk et al. (US 6,502,294 B2) in view of McCulloch (US 5,193,662).

Kusmierczyk discloses,

14. A method of inspecting a first workpiece during a production run in which workpieces are supplied to a plurality of workstations, said method comprising:

(a.) moving the first workpiece from an input area to a first workstation using the autoloader (Col. 3, lines 24-30); (b.) moving the first workpiece from the first workstation to a quality control station using the autoloader (Col. 5, lines 38-67); (c.) inspecting the first workpiece after step (b.) (Col. 5, lines 63-67); (d.) after

step (b.), moving a second workpiece from the input area to a second workstation using the autoloader (Col. 4, lines 44-48); (e.) determining whether the first workpiece is acceptable; and (f.) if the first workpiece is acceptable, moving the first workpiece from the quality control station to an output area using the autoloader (Col. 6, lines 27-51).

However, Kusmierczyk fails to specifically disclose an autoloader comprising a carriage movably mounted to a guidance structure. But McCulloch discloses a guide structure for lift and carry conveyors or autoloader (Abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of the ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kusmierczyk with the system of McCulloch because it would provide an improvement in guide structure for lift and carry conveyor systems (Col. 1, lines 6-7).

3. Claims 15, 18-20, 26-28 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kusmierczyk and McCulloch as applied to claim 14 above and further in view of Katsuura et al. (US. 6,324,749).

Regarding claims 15, 18-20, 26-28 and 31, Kusmierczyk and McCulloch disclose the limitations of claims 14 above but fail to disclose the limitations of claims 15, 18-20, 26-28 and 31. However, Katsuura discloses such limitations as follows:

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of: (g.) if the first workpiece is not acceptable, moving the first workpiece from the quality control station to a third workstation using the autoloader (Fig. 1, From Inspection Station to Repair

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Station).

18. The method of claim 14, wherein step (c) is performed on a stand alone jig, outside the quality control station (Fig. 3, Inspection Stations; Inspection Method Gauge).

19. The method of claim 14, wherein the workpieces are automotive crankshafts (Fig. 1, Interior equipment Zone; Col. 3, lines 42-46).

20. The method of claim 14, wherein the workstations all perform the same type of operation (Fig. 1, each zone includes machines that perform same type of operation).

As for claims 26-28, and 31 the same citations applied to claims 14 and 19 above and the citations applied to claims 1-2 in the office action of September 21, 2006, apply as well for claims 26-28 and 31. Please note that Katsuura discloses different zones wherein an autoloader would be transferring workpieces from zone to zone (Fig. 1).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of the ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings of Kusmierczyk and McCulloch with the assembly line of Katsuura because it would provide an improved automotive assembly line which can promptly identify an improper assembly (Katsuura, Col. 1, line 66- Col. 2, line 3).

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 1-3, 5-13, 21-22, 24-25 are allowed.

The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: The closest prior art of record Kusmierczyk, Changm McCulloch, Katsuura as described above, do not disclose or suggest, alone or in combination the step of:

As for independent claim 1, (c.) in response to the signal, interrupting the performance of the control routine at the end of the then current cycle and moving the selected workpiece from the selected one of the workstations to a quality control station; (d.) resuming the performance of the control routine (e.) inspecting the selected workpiece after step (d); (f.) determining whether the selected workpiece is acceptable; (g.) if the selected workpiece is acceptable, transporting the selected workpiece to an output area; and (h.) interrupting the control routine at the end of the then current cycle and moving the selected workpiece from the quality control station to the output area (h1) informing the control routine that non-selected workpieces should not be delivered to the selected one of the workstations; and wherein step (h1) is performed between steps (c) and (d), in combination with the other elements and features of the claimed invention.

As for independent claim 6, stamping the workpiece with a stamp indicating that the selected one of the workstations worked on the workpiece; and wherein step (i) is performed after step (h), in combination with the other elements and features of the claimed invention.

As for independent claim 8, wherein the workstations are operable to generate and transmit call signals, and the control routine is operable to receive said call signals; and wherein the performance of the control routine causes the workpieces to be supplied to the workstations based on the chronological order of the control routine's receipt of the call signals from the workstations, whereby the workstation that transmits the first received call signal is supplied with a workpiece first, in combination with the other elements and features of the claimed invention.

As for independent claim 21, stamping the selected workpiece with a stamp indicating that the selected one of the workstations worked on the selected workpiece and wherein step (g) is performed after step (f), in combination with the other elements and features of the claimed invention.

As for independent claim 24, wherein the workstations are operable to generate and transmit call signals, and the control routine is operable to receive said call signals; and wherein the control of the autoloader in accordance with the control routine causes the autoloader to supply the workpieces to the workstations based on the chronological order of the control routine's receipt of the call signals from the workstations, whereby the workstation that transmits the first received call signal is supplied with a workpiece first, in combination with the other elements and features of the claimed invention.

5. Claims 16-17, and 29-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed November 14, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

As for claim 14, Applicant contends that Kusmierczyk does not teach or suggest moving a first workpiece from a first workstation directly to a quality control station using an autoloader and moving a second workpiece from an input area directly to a second workstation using an autoloader. Examiner disagrees because Kusmierczyk teaches moving the first workpiece from an input area to a first workstation using the autoloader (Col. 3, lines 24-30, i.e., any workpiece moving from a workstation to another workstation); Kusmierczyk further discloses moving a second workpiece from an input area directly to a second workstation using an autoloader (Col. 4, lines 44-48, i.e., then will resume machining on the following workpiece. Please note that the following workpiece corresponds to the second workpiece).

As for claims 26-28 and 31, Applicant further argues that the proposed combination does not teach or suggest moving a first workpiece from a first workstation directly to a quality control station using an autoloader and moving the selected workpiece from the quality control station directly to an output area using an autoloader and moving the selected workpiece from the output area directly to a second input area in a second zone. Examiner disagrees because Kusmierczyk discloses moving a

workpiece from a workstation to a quality control station using an autoloader and moving the selected workpiece from the quality control station directly to an output are using the autoloader (Col. 5, lines 38-67; Col. 6, lines 27-31; the quality control station corresponds to the inspection station and the output area corresponds to the entry end after inspection). Please note that Katsuura discloses different zones wherein an autoloader would be transferring workpieces from zone to zone (Fig. 1). Therefore, the second input area corresponds to any other zone.

Conclusion

7. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

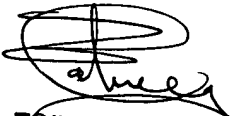
Any inquiry concerning communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Zoila Cabrera, whose telephone number is (571) 272-

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3738. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST (every other Friday).

If attempts to reach the examiner by phone fail, the examiner's supervisor, Leo Picard, can be reached on (571) 272-3749. Additionally, the fax phones for Art Unit 2125 are (571) 273-8300. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the group receptionist at (703) 305-9600.

Zoila Cabrera
Primary Examiner
1/25/07



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01/25/07